

Table 4-3

Nutrients and What They Do		
FOOD GROUP	KEY NUTRIENTS*	ACTION IN THE BODY
<b>Grains</b>	Carbohydrate, Fiber, B vitamins, Iron	<b>Carbohydrate</b> is the body's major source of energy. <b>Fiber</b> aids the movement of food through the digestive tract. <b>B vitamins</b> help in the body's use of energy. <b>Iron</b> carries oxygen in red blood cells and muscle cells.
<b>Vegetables</b>	Vitamin A, Vitamin C, Folate, Iron, Magnesium, Fiber	<b>Vitamin A</b> helps maintain skin and mucous membranes and aids in vision. <b>Vitamin C</b> helps the body heal and fight infections. <b>Folate</b> is needed for healthy blood cells and is important for cell division, such as in pregnancy and growth. <b>Magnesium</b> is found in bones and is important for muscle and nerve functioning.
<b>Fruits</b>	Vitamin A, Vitamin C, Potassium, Folate, Fiber	<b>Potassium</b> maintains the heart beat, regulates body fluids, and is needed for muscle and nerve functioning.
<b>Dairy</b>	Calcium, Vitamin D, Potassium, Protein Riboflavin	<b>Calcium</b> is needed for the development and maintenance of healthy bones and teeth. <b>Vitamin D</b> is needed for bone health and immune function. <b>Riboflavin</b> is a B vitamin that helps the body use energy.
<b>Protein Foods</b>	Protein, B vitamins, Iron, Zinc	<b>Protein</b> provides the building blocks needed for growth, replacement and maintenance of body tissues. <b>Zinc</b> is necessary for healing, taste perception, growth and sexual development.
<b>Oils</b> (not a food group)	Essential fatty acids	<b>Essential Fatty Acids</b> are needed for brain development and function, healthy cell membranes and normal growth and development.
<b>Empty Calories</b> (not a food group)	Simple Carbohydrates (sugars), Solid Fats	<b>Simple carbohydrates</b> or sugars provide energy but few other nutrients. <b>Solid Fats</b> such as animal fats, artificial trans fats (partially hydrogenated vegetable oils) and tropical oils may increase the risk of heart disease.

\*There are more than 40 different nutrients with many different functions that are required for good health. Each food group contributes many other nutrients in addition to the "key nutrients" listed here.